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231256Z Feb 05

C O N F I D E N T I A L ANKARA 000982

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/22/2025

TAGS: PREL PGOV TU I2

SUBJECT: ANKARA PUK REP SAYS TALABANI STRONGLY OPPOSES JA'AFARI FOR PM

Classified By: Counselor for Political-Military Affairs Timothy A. Bett
s for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C) Ankara PUK Representative Bahros Galali--who has proven to be well-connected to the PUK leadership--pulled PolMilOff aside after a Feb. 23 briefing Galali provided to local diplomats on the Iraqi elections (reported septel). He expressed party leader Jalal Talabani's deep concern that the United Iraqi Alliance (UIA) has chosen Ibrahim Ja'afari as its candidate for Prime Minister. Galali said that Talabani strongly opposes Ja'afari and believes that he is controlled by Iran.

¶2. (C) Galali reported that Talabani is now working along two tracks: to persuade UIA to put up another candidate as well as to seek to override the UIA's choice and install Allawi as PM. Galali asked for the U.S.'s support for these initiatives, and specifically asked for our views on Allawi continuing as PM. PolMilOff responded that this is an issue for Iraqis to resolve.

¶3. (C) Galali will accompany the GOT's Special Envoy for Iraq, Amb. Osman Koruturk, to Dokan on Feb. 24 for a meeting with Talabani. We will get a readout from both Galali and the Turks upon their return.

¶4. (U) Iraq posts minimize considered.

EDELMAN